

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS,  
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July 27, 2006

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Room 3E880  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The week before last I traveled to Iraq with Congressional Delegation Hoekstra. It was my thirteenth trip since April 2003. The purpose of the trip was to assess political developments, reconstruction efforts, the training and equipping of Iraqi Security Forces, and most importantly, the health and welfare of US military forces.

I believe our mission is noble, and that we should continue to support this fledgling democracy, but the Iraqi leaders must be made to understand it is time for them to take decisive control of their country and turn their words of good intent into action.

The following observations and recommendations are based on my recent visit; my Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations hearing of July 11, "The Evolving National Strategy for Victory in Iraq;" and Prime Minister al-Maliki's speech to the joint session of Congress on July 26.

**Observation:** Prime Minister al-Maliki outlined his goal of national reconciliation to end both the Sunni-based insurgency and the increasing Shia-Sunni armed conflict, which are threatening to erode much of what has been achieved since Iraq's liberation. Al-Maliki has put forward the detailed 24-point National Reconciliation and Dialogue Project, which the Parliament has been slow to implement. Without national reconciliation this violence will continue to further escalate.

**Recommendation:** Urge the Iraqi Parliament to take swift action on Prime Minister al-Maliki's reconciliation program, including a general amnesty and a roll-back of de-Baathification.

**Recommendation:** Be blunt with the Iraqi leadership that if they are not willing to make peace among themselves the United States will have no choice but to draw down its troops and leave Iraq.

**Observation:** Sunnis believe they are deprived of their share of oil revenue, and that the Constitution does not provide fair power sharing among Shias, Sunnis and Kurds.

**Recommendation:** Advocate the adoption of President Bush's June 14 recommendation that Iraq use its energy assets to unify the country.

**Recommendation:** Press for the convening of the Constitutional Review Commission, promised to Sunni leaders.

**Recommendation:** Advise the Supreme National Committee for Reconciliation and National Dialogue to act on Prime Minister al-Maliki's recommendations without further delay.

**Observation:** Negotiations among the Shias, Sunnis, and Kurds make Shia-Sunni reconciliation more difficult to achieve. The Shia goal of majority rule and the Sunni goal of a strong central government are compatible. Most Sunnis will accept majority rule, if there is a strong central government augmented with strong minority rights and fair sharing of oil revenue.

**Recommendation:** Recommend separate Shia-Sunni bilateral negotiations concluding with a multilateral agreement with the Kurds that preserves Kurdish autonomy.

**Observation:** If the city and province of Baghdad are not secure, Iraq will not be secure. Because of its Shia-Sunni population, Baghdad is the center of sectarian violence that may spiral into total civil war. The Coalition is attempting to secure Baghdad, but lacks enough troops to achieve this goal.

**Recommendation:** Urge the Iraqi Government to confront the militias and bring them under its control.

**Recommendation:** Increase in Baghdad the number of Multi-National Force troops—primarily Iraqi security forces—from 75,000 to at least 125,000, to meet the established ratio of 20 troops per 1,000 civilians. This is the approximate ratio used during operations in Tal Afar and proved successful in securing that city.

**Observation:** Unemployment is too high, making life difficult for many Iraqis, and creating an environment where Iraqi men are susceptible to joining the insurgency in return for cash.

**Recommendation:** Hire Iraqis to rebuild Iraq. Successful models used by non-governmental organizations, like Mercy Corps, Save the Children and Catholic Relief Services should be followed.

**Recommendation:** Use Iraqi firms to the maximum. Disallow the practice of multiple levels of subcontractors to the extent possible.

I agree with Prime Minister Maliki that we must “look beneath the violence” at the advances in women’s rights, a free press, and, most importantly, replacing a murderous dictatorship with multi-party democracy, but I am not yet convinced the Prime Minister is willing to take on the sectarian violence that could wipe out these accomplishments.

My biggest concern is still not that we will lose the war in Iraq, within Iraq itself, but that we will lose the war in Iraq here at home. It is imperative the Administration and Congress not allow this to happen.

These observations and recommendations are offered in the hope of moving Iraq toward the goals set out in the “National Security Strategy for Victory in Iraq:” a democratic society at peace with its neighbors.

As always, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters with you more fully. If you have any questions or would like additional information on these observations and recommendations, please contact me at 202-225-5541, or one of my staff, Dr. R. Nicholas Palarino, Staff Director, or Mr. Robert Kelley, Chief Counsel, at 202-225-2528.

Sincerely,

Christopher Shays  
Chairman

cc: Rep. Tom Davis  
Rep. Henry Waxman  
Rep. Kenny Marchant  
Rep. Dennis Kucinich  
Rep. Peter Hoekstra